

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for mediating collection of users in accordance with a request of a requester of the collection, comprising:

a communication circuit for communicating with terminals via a network;

5 a storage circuit for storing, in advance, collection information representing said collection;

a collection sending circuit connected to said communication circuit and said storage circuit for sending said collection information to terminals of said users, said user's terminal storing unrewritable identification information for specifying the terminal itself of the user, and said user's terminal reading out said identification information, and sending said application information and said identification information to said apparatus when the user enters the application information for applying for said collection into said user's terminal;

15 a user information storage circuit for storing, in advance, said identification information and user information corresponding to said identification information;

an application receiving circuit connected to said communication circuit for receiving said application information and said identification information from said user's terminals;

20 a retrieval circuit connected to said application receiving circuit and said user information storage circuit for retrieving the user information stored corresponding to said received identification information; and

25 an application sending circuit connected to said communication circuit and said retrieval circuit for sending the user information retrieved by said retrieval circuit and said application information to said terminal of the requester.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a collection target receiving circuit connected to said communication circuit for receiving information representing the collection target users

5 determined corresponding to said user information from said terminal of the requester; and

10 a collection target retrieval circuit connected to said user's information storage circuit and said collection target receiving circuit for retrieving the users matching with said collection target users based on the information representing said collection target users and said user information, wherein

said collection sending circuit includes a circuit for sending said collection information to the terminal of the user retrieved by said collection target retrieval circuit.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
said user information includes personal information representing a name and an address of the user, and

5 said application sending circuit includes a circuit for sending said user information to said terminal of the requester in a manner preventing determination of said personal information by said requester.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:
a lottery circuit for selecting a winner from the applicants based on said user information; and

5 a personal information sending circuit connected to said communication circuit and said lottery circuit for sending said personal information of said winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner so as to allow determination of said personal information by said shipping agent.

5. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein
said terminal of the requester selects a winner from the applicants based on said user information, and sends the user information of the winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner,
5 said shipping agent cannot determine the personal information of said winner based on the received user information, said terminal of the

shipping agent makes an inquiry to said apparatus about the personal information of said winner based on the user information of said winner received from said terminal of the requester, and said apparatus further comprises:

an inquiry receiving circuit connected to said communication circuit for receiving the user information of said winner from said terminal of the shipping agent; and

a personal information sending circuit connected to said communication circuit for sending the personal information of said winner to said terminal of the shipping agent so as to allow determination of said personal information by said shipping agent.

6. An apparatus for mediating collection of users in accordance with a request of a requester of the collection, comprising:

communication means for communicating with terminals via a network;

storage means for storing, in advance, collection information representing said collection;

collection sending means connected to said communication means and said storage means for sending said collection information to terminals of said users, said user's terminal storing unrewritable identification information for specifying the terminal itself of the user, and said user's terminal reading out said identification information, and sending said application information and said identification information to said apparatus when the user enters the application information for applying for said collection into said user's terminal;

user information storage means for storing, in advance, said identification information and user information corresponding to said identification information;

application receiving means connected to said communication means for receiving said application information and said identification information from said user's terminals;

retrieval means connected to said application receiving means and

said user information storage means for retrieving the user information stored corresponding to said received identification information; and

25 application sending means connected to said communication means and said retrieval means for sending the user information retrieved by said retrieval means and said application information to said terminal of the requester.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

5 collection target receiving means connected to said communication means for receiving information representing the collection target users determined corresponding to said user information from said terminal of the requester; and

collection target retrieval means connected to said user's information storage means and said collection target receiving means for retrieving the users matching with said collection target users based on the information representing said collection target users and said user information, wherein

10 said collection sending means includes means for sending said collection information to the terminal of the user retrieved by said collection target retrieval means.

8. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein

said user information includes personal information representing a name and an address of the user, and

5 said application sending means includes means for sending said user information to said terminal of the requester in a manner preventing determination of said personal information by said requester.

9. The collection mediating apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

lottery means for selecting a winner from the applicants based on said user information; and

5 personal information sending means connected to said communication means and said lottery means for sending said personal

information of said winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner so as to allow determination of said personal information by said shipping agent.

10. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein
said terminal of the requester selects a winner from the applicants based on said user information, and sends the user information of the winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner,
5 said shipping agent cannot determine the personal information of said winner based on the received user information, said terminal of the shipping agent makes an inquiry to said apparatus about the personal information of said winner based on the user information of said winner received from said terminal of the requester, and said collection mediating apparatus further comprises:

10 inquiry receiving means connected to said communication means for receiving the user information of said winner from said terminal of the shipping agent; and

15 personal information sending means connected to said communication means for sending the personal information of said winner to said terminal of the shipping agent so as to allow determination of said personal information by said shipping agent.

11. A method for mediating collection of users in accordance with a request of a requester of the collection, comprising the steps of:

preparing collection information representing said collection;

sending said collection information to terminals of said users,

5 said user's terminal storing unrewritable identification information for specifying the terminal itself of the user, and said user's terminal reading out said identification information, and sending said application information and said identification information when the user enters the application information for applying for said collection into said user's
10 terminal;

preparing identification information and user information

corresponding to said identification information;

receiving said application information and said identification information from said user's terminal;

15 retrieving the user information stored corresponding to said received identification information; and

sending the user information retrieved in said step of retrieving the user information and said application information to a terminal of said requester.

12. The method according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

5 receiving information representing the collection target users determined corresponding to said user information from said terminal of the requester; and

retrieving the users matching with said collection target users based on the information representing said collection target users and said user information, wherein

10 said step of sending the collection information includes the step of sending said collection information to the terminal of the user retrieved in said step of retrieving said user.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein

said user information includes personal information representing a name and an address of the user, and

5 said step of sending said user information and said application information includes the step of sending said user information to said terminal of the requester in a manner preventing determination of said personal information by said requester.

14. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

selecting a winner from the applicants based on said user information; and

5 sending said personal information of said winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner so as to allow determination of said personal information by said shipping agent.

15. The method according to claim 13, wherein
said terminal of the requester selects a winner from the applicants based on said user information, and sends the user information of the winner to a terminal of a shipping agent delivering a prize to said winner,
5 said shipping agent cannot determine the personal information of said winner based on the received user information, said terminal of the shipping agent makes an inquiry about the personal information of said winner based on the user information of said winner received from said terminal of the requester, and said collection mediating method further
10 comprises the steps of:
 receiving the user information of said winner from said terminal of the shipping agent; and
 sending the personal information of said winner to said terminal of the shipping agent so as to allow determination of said personal
15 information by said shipping agent.